

CLAIMS

1. A composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis, which comprises a decoction or extract obtained from a subset of the set of herbs consisting of:

Radix Ledebouriella

5 *Fructus Tribuli*

Herba Potentilla Chinensis

Caulis Clematis Armandii

Radix Rehmannia

Radix Glycyrrhiza

10 *Radix Paeonia Rubra*

Cortex Dictamni Radicis

Herba Lopatheri

Spika Schizonepetae

in the substantial absence of any other herb;

15 said decoction or extract comprising one or more of those components present in fractions which run with Rf values in the ranges:

0.00 to 0.100;

0.167 to 0.300;

0.400 to 0.533;

20 0.700 to 0.833; or

0.900 to 0.967

if an aqueous solution of a freeze-dried decoction of said set of herbs is subjected to chromatography on a Whatman 2cm x 55cm 3MM cellulose strip for 10 hours using a solvent mixture of butanol, ethanol and water in the proportions 4:1:1.

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2. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoction or extract comprises one or more of those components present in fractions which run with Rf values in the range 0.00 to 0.100 under the said chromatography.

3. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoction or extract comprises one or more of those components running with Rf values in the ranges 0.00 to 0.100, 0.167 to 0.300, 0.400 to 0.533, 0.700 to 0.833 or 0.900 to 0.967 which is capable of being extracted with water from said chromatography strip.

4. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoction or extract comprises one or more of those components running with Rf values in the ranges 0.700 to 0.833 or 0.900 to 0.967 which is capable of being extracted with methanol from said chromatography strip.

5. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein said subset consists of one or more of the herbs:-

Cortex Dictamni Radicis

Radix Paeonia Rubra

5 *Radix Rehmannia*

Spika Schizonepetae

Radix Glycyrrhiza

in the substantial absence of any other herb.

6. A composition as claimed in claim 5, wherein said subset consists of one of the said herbs in the substantial absence of any other herb.

7. A composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the one herb is *Radix Paeonia Rubra*.

8. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein said subset consists of one or more of the following sets of herbs:-

5 (a) *Radix Paeonia Rubra*
Radix Glycyrrhiza
Radix Rehmannia

10 (b) *Cortex Dictamni*
Radix Paeonia Rubra
Radix Glycyrrhiza
Radix Rehmannia
Radix Ledebouriella
Fructus Tribuli

or

15 (c) *Radix Paeonia Rubra*
Radix Glycyrrhiza
Spika Schizonepetae

in the substantial absence of any other herb.

9. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoction or extract is prepared by a process including removing those components extractable with hexane or other non-polar solvent.

10. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoction or extract is prepared by a process including an initial water extraction.

11. A composition as claimed in claim 1, suitable for the treatment of atopic or non-atopic eczema.

12. A composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein said decoction or extract is present in an amount which causes a percentage inhibition of

interleukin 4 (IL4) induced CD23 expression of at least 25% in peripheral blood monocytes.

13. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis comprising a treatment-effective amount of the composition of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

14. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 13, which is formulated for oral, parenteral or topical administration.

15. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis, which consists essentially of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and a treatment-effective amount of a decoction or extract obtained from one, or from a mixture of more than one, of the herbs:

Cortex Dictamni Radicis
Radix Paeonia Rubra
Radix Rehmannia
Spika Schizonepetae
 10 *Radix Glycyrrhiza*

in the substantial absence of any other herb.

16. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 15 formulated for oral, parenteral or topical administration.

17. A method of treating a human or non-human animal suffering from, or susceptible to, a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis; which comprises administering to said human or non-human animal a treatment-effective amount of the composition of claim 1.

18. A method of treating a human or non-human animal suffering from, or susceptible to, a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis, which comprises administering to said human or non-human animal a treatment-effective amount of the composition of claim 13.

19. A method of treating a human or non-human animal suffering from, or susceptible to, a disease selected from the group consisting of atopic disease, non-atopic eczema and psoriasis, which comprises administering to said human or non-human animal a treatment-effective amount of the composition of claim 15.

20. A method as claimed in claim 17 or claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the disease is atopic or non-atopic eczema.